June 1989

Equity Matters

University of Toronto

Status of Women Office / Office of the President

Advisory Committee **Generating Gender Agenda**

From strippers in the classroom (we kid you not) to appointment and promotion of women in somewhat less exposed lines of work, from improving personal safety and security on campus to including women with the "men of ev'ry faculty" in *The Blue and White*, from the child care needs of a diverse campus community to male/female student attrition rates, the Advisory Committee to the Status of Women Officer covers a lot of critical and interesting ground.

The Committee does not have formal terms of reference; as its name implies, it acts in an advisory capacity, identifying issues, providing a sounding board for proposals, and recommending directions that the Status of Women Office might take.

An unexpected injection of "skule spirit" propelled the Committee into the present session when a delegation of (mostly women) students from the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering came to the October meeting to defend the *Toike Oike*. (The discussion ended in a draw.) The Committee has also talked to John Kirkness, the Provost's Advisor on Undergraduate Education, about ways in which his new office and the Status of Women Office might work together on mutual concerns.

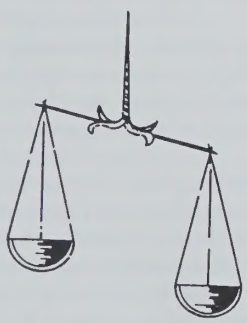
Advisory Committee members have taken an active interest in policy development (student housing; campus media/student societies/human rights), and have brought their particular perspectives to the recent review of the School of Graduate Studies, the Librarian's Association, University of Toronto (LAUT) Professional Opportunities Committee Report, and the Presidential Search Committee.

The 1988-89 Advisory Committee includes students Keren Morehead, Karen Pearson, Darlene Robinson, and Pegatha Taylor; faculty members Jane Abray, Kay Armatage, Maxine Kleindienst, Kathryn Morgan, and John Shaw; librarian Cathy Matthews; and Michael Dafoe (who also holds a teaching appointment), Judith Gilliland, Jennifer Guyatt, Joanne Kacaba, Mary Lynne McIntosh, and Jacquelyn Wolf from the administrative staff.

Lois Reimer chairs the Committee, and Sandra Grant, also of the Status of Women Office, is Secretary. Enquiries about the Committee's work, and items or issues for its attention are always welcome. LR

Women and the Law

Gender Inequality in the Courts



Women are the victims of gender unfairness in the courts, says a 1988 report on Gender Equality in the Courts. The study, by the Manitoba Association of Women and the Law, states that women in the legal profession and female clients are not treated fairly in court.

"Women lawyers frequently and systematically face...sex discrimination in placement interviews;....demeaning comments by male judges and lawyers; sexual harassment; and lower pay scales and lack of opportunity to work in their chosen area", concludes the report. Another concern is that adequate maternity leave is not provided.

The "lack of opportunity to move into positions of power and status, such as partnership and management positions, and the judiciary" is unequivocally reflected in recent statistics. In 1986, 5.6% of federally-appointed judges in Ontario were women. In Prince Edward Island, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories none of the federally-appointed judges were women. Representation of women in the federal courts, at 10.6%, is not much better.

The study also found that in law schools female faculty and students are subject to discrimination and sexual harassment.

Gender unfairness in the courts extends far beyond women in the legal profession and in law schools. According to the report, in family law cases, such as spousal maintenance, child custody and marital property division, women are "disadvantaged".

"The legislation is gender-neutral", says the report, however, "social constructs and judicial interpretation result in gender bias towards women".

Women are also treated unfairly in the area of personal injury. The report states that, presently, it is often "cheaper to tortiously injure a female person (of any age) than a male".

As a solution to these problems the study recommends that education programs should be developed and implemented for judges and lawyers. These issues should also be addressed in law schools. "Law faculties should also be encouraged to teach courses on women's issues, to incorporate feminist analysis in and educate law students on inappropriate and unprofessional actions, and to set an example."

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Status Quote

"We look at their pictures and select the ones who seem least likely to get married."

(Harriet W. Sheridan, Professor of English and Director, Center for the Advancement of College Teaching, Brown University, speaking at the 1989 National Conference of the American Association of Higher Education and recalling the advice she had received as a doctoral student concerning the admission of women to graduate studies at Yale.)

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The Faculty of Law at the U of T has taken steps towards improving the treatment of women by offering a lecture series on "Feminist Perspectives on Law."

Feminist Perspectives on Law

A bridge between feminist perspectives and legal theory is provided by the Faculty of Law at the U of T as one of four annual "bridge weeks" that focus on disciplines that affect legal theory and practice. During each of these bridge weeks regular classes continue on a rotational basis, but the primary focus is on the bridge week readings and lectures.

The purpose of the bridge weeks is "to introduce students to the study of the principal theoretical perspectives on law," says J. R. S. Prichard, Dean of the Faculty of Law.

According to Assistant Dean Joan Lax, one of the intentions of the feminist bridge week is "to enable students to read cases from a feminist perspective".

First-year students, who are required to attend, are not the only students interested in this bridge week. "The importance of the feminist bridge week to Law students was reflected in the attendance of many students who did not have access to this program in their first year", says Roxanne Mykitiuk, a third-year student.

Kathleen Gallivan, a first-year student, believes that "feminist scholarship has an important role to play in the criticism of legal theory and doctrine and that this critique extends beyond areas of so-called 'women's law'... It is empowering to have this perspective validated by the school", says Gallivan.

Following is a taste of what was covered in the feminist bridge week...

Silence, Challenge and Empowerment

The exploration of the effects of sexism on classroom participation is empowering for previously silent and silenced students.

The socialization that encourages women to internalize their reactions to sexism is a major problem in the classroom. Professors often react negatively when students draw their attention to the sexist bias in their teaching. Students soon learn that the non-sexist point of view is better left unexpressed in most classrooms.

The promise of eventual power encourages students who are silenced in classrooms to accept their situation as temporary and, thus, discourages them from challenging teaching methods that reinforce competition and lead to a sense of alienation. This view is developed by Carrie Menkel-Meadow in "Feminist Legal Theory, Critical Legal Studies, and Legal Education".

Menkel-Meadow rejects the hierarchical model of teaching in which the instructor is regarded as omniscient, because it creates a sense of separation. A sense of connection, she advances, can be developed through experiential learning and collaborative teaching.

The absence of women and women's issues in law school texts is another form of silencing. As long as these topics are omitted from law school courses graduates will not be adequately prepared to represent women.

Nancy S. Erickson, in "Sex Bias in Law School Courses", suggests that professors supplement case books with photocopied material to compensate for the lack of representation of women's issues and other issues not adequately covered in case books.

Solutions to silencing are discussed by Stephanie M. Wildman in "The Question of Silence: Techniques to Ensure Full Class Participation". Wildman believes that silence is often an active expression of alienation, hostility and anger.

Through studying the problems that cause and perpetuate silence, students develop an awareness that enables them to identify the sources and degrees of silencing that they experience. Once students can identify the causes of their silence they can speak out against them.

Silent anger generates frustration. Expressed anger can yield positive changes.

Feminist Ethics

To give students a broader perspective on feminist perspectives, the starting points of several feminisms are studied during the bridge week.

In the reading "A Framework For Feminist Ethics", Carol S. Robb maintains that the pluralism of feminism must be acknowledged by feminist ethicists.

According to Robb, there cannot be a single feminist ethics because the cause of the oppression of women can be derived from a number of social and political foundations on which an ethical theory is based.

Robb discusses the different analyses by radical, Marxist-Leninist and socialist feminists and by critics of sex-rolism to illustrate the relationship between social-political thought and ethics.

Radical feminists believe that the roots of women's oppression are men. According to radical feminists all forms of oppression, such as sexism, racism and classism, are due to the supremacy of males in power.

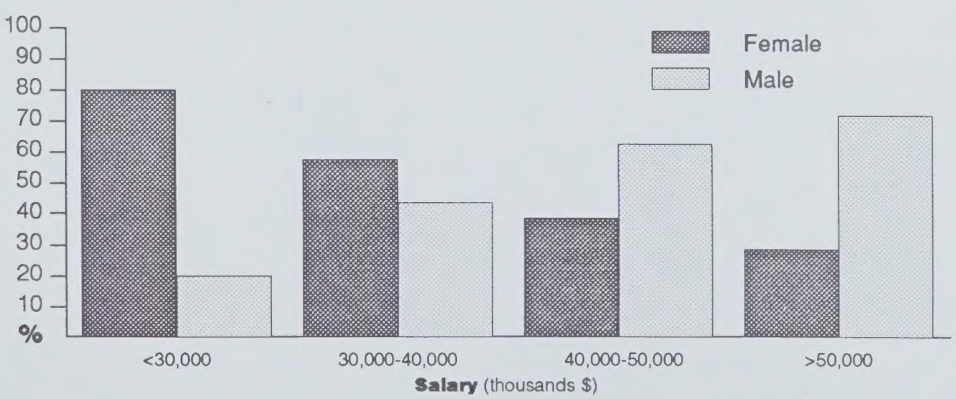
Sex-rolism focuses on socially constructed sex roles as the roots of the problem. Those who adhere to this perspective advocate, primarily, the reform of education and of workplace/home relationships.

Marxist-Leninist feminists believe that unequal conditions in capitalist societies originate with private property. They hold that the emancipation of all oppressed people will be achieved through revolution.

Socialist feminists are in agreement with Marxist-Leninist feminists on this point; however, they acknowledge cultural and political values, as well as economic conditions, as sources of the oppression of women. They believe that revolution is a necessary step but that revolution in itself will not lead to a greater understanding of feminist issues. According to them, the transformation of social values and repro-

Speaking Graphically

Administrative (non-unionized) full-time staff
Women and men as % of Total By Salary



Notes: 1. Women comprise 65% of the total non-unionized administrative full-time staff.
2. 55% of women are concentrated in 3 job categories.

duction, and an educational program are also necessary.

A commonality between feminist ethical perspectives is the recognition of concerns specific to women and the willingness to challenge a social-political system which, at times, does not recognize and, at others, marginalizes women and women's issues.

Robb believes that feminist ethicists must "make clear the analyses of the roots of women's oppression" and relate their work to women of all classes and races. This, she hopes, will lead to more complete ethical theories.

Feminist Theory and Law: Practical Applications

The belief that the legal process is an objective process leads many to overlook the hidden assumptions on which the legal system is constructed.

The need to challenge the patriarchal assumptions on which law is based is emphasized by Leslie Bender in "A Lawyer's Primer on Feminist Theory and Tort". Bender believes that "because our legal system has developed from an unstated male norm, it has never focused adequately on harms to women".

There is a need to "apply the insights of feminism and consciousness-raising to law creation, interpretation, and the training of future lawyers".

During the bridge week students have the opportunity to apply feminist criticism to reported cases. The series closes with lectures on pornography, rape, abortion and family law.

A Necessary Step

The study of feminist issues as they relate to specific professions is a necessary step in the development of an awareness of these concerns both in specific fields and in our communities.

The study of feminist perspectives would benefit students in any program. Students who develop their critical abilities with an awareness of various perspectives will be better equipped to recognize and to challenge biased assumptions that could be disempowering for them or for other community members.

The feminist bridge week sponsored by the Faculty of Law could serve as a model for other faculties or departments that wish to provide students with a broader perspective on issues related to their field of study and intended profession.

Congratulations to the Faculty of Law and to Professors R. Colker, P. Macklem, R. Moon, J. Nedelsky, C. Rogerson and L. Weinrib for their efforts to make this one of the most successful bridge weeks. LM

Too Much to Ask For?

Women as agents of change is a primary concern of Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. In her recent lecture at the U of T, Dr. Sadik discussed the need for increased investment by the international community in women's development.

The value of women beyond the reproductive sphere must be recognized; the crucial role of women in the productive process must no longer be overlooked or undervalued, Sadik maintains. She recognizes women as managers of the micro-environment, noting that women's "demand for fuel and water, and their disposal of household wastes, have critical effects on the ecological balance."

To effect positive social and environmental change, the choices available to women must be broadened. "Eventually", declares Sadik, "population decisions are taken not by governments, still less by international organizations, but by billions of individual men and women".

Sadik rejects the 'trickle-down approach' as, historically, the increase in the wealth of a nation often has not meant immediate improvements for the poor. Nor has it benefited the global ecological balance.

'Grass roots development' is redefined by Sadik. "I prefer to call it 'investing in the future'," she declares, "because it implies a total concentration on the long-term social effects of development investment rather than on direct economic return."

According to Sadik, $5 billion, $2 billion more than the current budget, must be spent annually on family planning. To develop "social programming, effective primary health care, education, legal reform and attitudinal change" an additional $5-10 billion would be required.

This sounds like a high budget until Sadik reminds us that it is only 1% of the amount annually spent on weapons. "Is that too much to ask for?", she asks. Well...is it?

From the UN to the U of T

The role of women in development is addressed at the United Nations and at the University of Toronto. Many of the concerns outlined by UN spokesperson Nafis Sadik are studied in the Women's Studies course on Third World Women.

"Women are not responsible for development problems. They are, however, an important part of the solution, "maintains Bonnie Kettel, the 1988-89 instructor for the U of T course.

"There is no 'trickle-down'," advances Kettel, "there is a 'trickle-over'". Projects addressed to women generate a ripple effect; the benefits trickle over to men and children.

Sadik and Kettel both maintain that everyone in developing countries could benefit from the empowerment of women.

100 Women In Toronto

A Wonderful Breakthrough

Issues relating to women in developing countries recently received a significant boost on this campus. A generous gift to the Women's Studies Program at New College will support a visiting lectureship in the field of native women, women of colour, and third world women. The anonymous donation, $500,000 over five years, is also expected to be used for speakers, colloquia, and resource materials. LM

Women's Studies: Beyond St.George

(The Women's Studies Program at New College has been discussed in previous issues of Equity Matters.*)*

Scarborough

The idea of developing a women's studies program at Scarborough College was introduced by Suniti Namjoshi in 1978. The wheels were set in motion and women's studies courses were first offered in 1981-82. The program came into being the following year as a joint humanities and social sciences program. It is currently funded by the Division of Humanities. The Acting Discipline Representative is Chantal Bertrand-Jennings.

The current program offers two core courses (an introductory level course and an independent studies course), and several interdisciplinary courses. A broad range of topics which include: why Women's Studies?, women in history, gender-role socialization, transmission and perpetuation of image, sexism and language, women's roles and work, and dis-

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cussions on contemporary issues is included in the introduction to women's studies, currently taught by Connie Guberman.

According to Guberman, women's studies is important because it validates women's experiences. "There is a tension between feeling and learning in women's studies," says Guberman. "In my classes I try to maintain a balance between academic rigor and the acknowledgment of students' feelings and experience".

The program at Scarborough continues to develop. Connie Guberman feels that people want to be inspired. "There is a new infusion of energy among women's studies professors," says Guberman. This energy clearly extends beyond the St. George campus.

Erindale

A women's studies program is not offered at the Erindale Campus, but an interest in women's issues is reflected in several courses offered at Erindale. Those interested in the historical status of women can study the history of women in Canada or in Europe in one of the two courses provided by the History Department. Women and Literature, and Women Writers are studied in the French and English Departments. The social anthropology of gender is studied in the Anthropology Department, which offers two courses related to gender and sex difference. LM

Kay Armatage

Another Woman of Distinction at U of T

Kay Armatage of Cinema Studies and Women's Studies was honoured by the YWCA of Metropolitan Toronto at a festive awards dinner at the Convention Centre on May 11. Now in their ninth year, the Women of Distinction Awards celebrate the achievement of women from all walks of life for outstanding work on behalf of women and contribution to the community. Kay's citation notes her "prolific and valued body of work in the arts through her filmmaking and her academic career". Kay was nominated for the award by Principal Ted Chamberlin of New College and Status of Women Officer Lois Reimer.

Ursula Franklin

Wiegand Award

Professor Ursula Franklin has received the first Wiegand Award for Canadian Excellence for outstanding contribution to an understanding of the human dimensions of science and technology.

Established in 1988 by the Wiegand Foundation in memory of "chemist turned classicist" William B. Wiegand, the Award is administered by the University of Waterloo's Centre for Society, Technology and Values.

In announcing the award the Director of the Centre noted: "The mission of the Centre is to promote an increased awareness of the impact of technology on the human experience in our time, and Dr. Franklin has embodied that spirit."

Ursula Franklin was also invited to deliver the Massey Lectures this year, on "The Real World of Technology".

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